



SACRILEGE AND SECULARITY: Queer Provocations in the Study of Religion

Melissa M. Wilcox

Tuesday 19 March 2019
5:30-7:00 pm

Concordia University
1450 Guy Street, MB-9CD
Montreal

In 2007, two Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence attended a Roman Catholic Mass in habit, and received the Eucharist from the Archbishop of San Francisco. Conservative horror and radical glee over the event recalled reactions to the Stop the Church protest in New York City nearly two decades earlier, during which a protester had crumbled a consecrated communion wafer. The Sisters were there, too. And just two years earlier, in 1987, the Sisters held a Papal Mass in reaction to Pope John Paul II's visit to San Francisco, protesting the pontiff's attitudes toward gays and lesbians, AIDS, and reproductive rights. Were these acts secular? Religious? Sacrilegious? Focusing on queer activism and its relationship to the religious, this talk will explore the fraught politics of defining religion and the secular in a world where Christian hegemony passes as neutrality and religion is considered the sole province of the hetero- and homonormative.

Melissa M. Wilcox is Professor and Hölstein Family and Community Chair of Religious Studies at the University of California, Riverside. Her books include *Coming Out in Christianity: Religion, Identity, and Community*; *Sexuality and the World's Religions*; *Queer Women and Religious Individualism*; *Religion in Today's World: Global Issues, Sociological Perspectives*; and *Queer Nuns: Religion, Activism, and Serious Parody*.

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